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BANGLADESH

FIRST PERSON

Families Start Talking About Health

Parents learn to talk openly with their children about reproductive health



Photo: BCCP

“I thought there was a need to create an open environment for parents to listen to their adolescent children and give proper advice,” said Depali, right.

Depali Rani is a mother of a teenage daughter living in the village of Hakimpur in southwestern Bangladesh. Like many of her neighbors, Depali knew little about reproductive health and did not know how to counsel her daughter when she asked for advice on the subject. She remembers one day when her daughter reached puberty and approached her in tears to ask what the problem was. Uncomfortable, Depali did not know how to respond.

USAID is working to educate Bangladeshi teens and reduce misinformation with the award-winning multimedia kit, “Know Yourself.” The materials in the kit include books, CDs and video tapes that talk about puberty, marriage, family health, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. In addition, community workshops are held for parents, teachers and community leaders to create an environment that enables open communication about reproductive health.

At a workshop organized by USAID, Depali and other parents learned about adolescent reproductive health. Depali immediately recalled her discomfort when her daughter reached puberty, and she became determined to share her new knowledge with other parents. She organized smaller workshops to teach other families in her village about reproductive health. She also counseled them on how to talk with their children and urged them to give accurate advice on how to deal with these physical changes.

Depali and her daughter now openly talk about reproductive health issues, and the families in Hakimpur are now more able to keep their children healthy.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>